



Tri-County Arts Council's

TIPS FOR WRITING A SUCCESSFUL NYSCA DEC GRANT

I'm glad you are interested in applying for a New York State Council of the Arts (NYSCA) grant! These decentralized (DEC) grants are administered by Tri-County Arts Council. The process is competitive and writing a grant that is clear and well developed is essential. Guidelines can be your key to understanding all of the rules and regulations of the grant – whether you're eligible, what the money can be spent on, how do you apply, etc. While we have attempted to keep them as simple as possible, the materials can seem dense. Before beginning your application, you should carefully study the guidelines. Many people fill out the application without reading the guidelines which can result in an unclear and incomplete application. Below are some tips for the process!

Happy Planning!

Read, all available material. Give yourself plenty of time to carefully read through the application and guidelines at www.myartscouncil.net/dec-grants You can see other DEC funded events for this year at <http://events.myartscouncil.net/events/category/dec-funded-events/> for inspiration.

Spell it out. The panel is most likely not familiar with organizations, artists, or events that you are referring to so please give a description. If you use abbreviations, make sure the full title is written in the beginning of your document.

Write to the Funder. You should be aware of the purpose of your funding. Even if your project will have an impact on tourism or the local economy, don't forget that the primary purpose is for arts and culture.

Keep it positive! Grants that have lots of negative language or heavy criticism are not as successful as the ones that are more optimistic. For example, rather than saying "Mountainville has no arts or culture-- our concert series is the only music event in a 50 mile radius" instead, "Our concert series is a treasure for Mountainville and attracts visitors from neighboring rural communities". Your enthusiasm will make panelists more excited about your project.

Match the narrative with the budget. The panel should expect what they will see in the budget sheet after reading your narrative. Your grant should have all fiscal information in both the written section of the grant and your numerical budget sheet. For example, your detailed statement might say, "Our workshop series will feature three local artists. We will pay each artist \$100." Your budget sheet would then read: Artists (3 @\$100/ea) =\$300

Provide details in your budget sheet. Similarly, provide the panelists with as many details as you can in your budget. For example, if you are showing income for a festival you might put “Admission (~50 tickets @ \$10/ea) = \$500” Rather than simply “Admission \$500”

Only include information that is relevant to this grant funding. While detail is important, too much material could be distracting and unnecessary. Make it clear what it is you want funding for and do not include information that isn't relevant.

Shop Locally. Applicants are encouraged to use regional artists and partner organizations when implementing their projects. If you are bringing in an artist outside the region, demonstrate the value in this.

Professional Support Materials. Make sure your support materials, whether artistic samples or marketing materials, look as professional as possible. This doesn't mean you need to hire a professional to take photos, but, just take time and care in presenting all materials in the best manner possible.

Do a spellcheck and a math check. Go over spelling, make sure all the categories are filled in appropriately and make sure the math is accurate on your budget sheet. If there are mistakes in your application, the panelists might assume there will be mistakes with your project!

Similar or Prior Funding. Support of an organization in the past does not imply or guarantee that an applicant's project will be funded. Applications are reviewed each year in the context of the evaluation criteria and available funding and evaluated competitively against other requests. There is also no guarantee an applicant will receive equivalent funding as an applicant with a similar and/or joint funding request and project. Organizations who partner up with other organizations to implement the same or similar projects should apply under one application.

Submit a draft for review! You can send in a draft two weeks before it is due to get feedback and to make revisions. This is a great opportunity to improve the grant before the panelists see it.